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Task Force On Urbanization And The Future

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Progress Report

Task Force on Urbanization and the Future

November 1973

10006 - 107 St., Edmonton, Alberta, Tel.: (403) 424-6186

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FOREWORD

In its concern with urban and regional studies in Alberta, the Task Force has used a number of approaches. Some projects are being carried out by its own research officers, some are being jointly undertaken with other agencies, and some are being carried out by municipalities with the assistance of grants from the Task Force.

The main projects being undertaken by the Task Force are: an inventory of Urban and Regional Research in Alberta (1950-1972); Economic and Social Statistics for Alberta Municipalities; and Co-ordination of Information Systems and Data Banks in Alberta. A substantial part of the work has been completed in all three projects.

A project jointly undertaken with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Alberta Housing Corporation was the Research Design for the Mill Woods Impact Study. The report has now been completed and is being reviewed by the study committee.

A study being assisted by a grant from the Task Force is the Regional Resources Project #1, in the Drumheller area. This pilot project is in the second year of operation and has had very substantial support both locally and from provincial departments and agencies. It has to date done some very interesting and useful work in community and economic development in small towns.

Another aspect of the Task Force activities has been assistance in publishing studies related to urbanization. This has been to ensure a wide circulation for these documents which may be of interest or value to the people of the area and to outside agencies. These studies include: a study of patterns of urban growth in Alberta, prepared by the Red Deer Regional Planning Commission; a review of planning methods and development strategies

for the Town of High River; and a summary of the Preliminary Regional Plan, prepared by the Peace River Regional Planning Commission. These studies have been published for wider distribution in the province, or to relevant agencies outside of Alberta, because they contain information otherwise not readily available, or they have used new methods or approaches which are worth careful assessment.

In addition to these projects, the Task Force is participating, at the request of various agencies, in a number of major studies in the Province. It is represented by a member of staff on the steering or liaison committees of: the Edmonton Region Growth Study; the Calgary Region Growth Study; the City of Calgary Urban Evaluation Study; the Metropolitan Ring Road Studies; and the Alberta Land Use Forum.

The staff is also maintaining ongoing contact with urban research groups in other provinces, and at the federal level.

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TASK FORCE PROJECTS

Inventory of Urban and Regional Research in Alberta, 1950-1972

Work on the inventory has been undertaken to meet an obvious and real need for a listing of urban and regional studies in Alberta. The Inventory will include Federal, Provincial, Regional, Municipal, University and Non Governmental studies and research. It will be cross indexed by author, subject matter and location.

Two volumes of the Index have been published to date. Volume #1 covering studies undertaken by: the Provincial Planning Branch, Department of Municipal Affairs; the seven Regional Planning Commissions; the cities of Camrose, Drumheller, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Wetaskiwin; and the graduate theses of the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary. Volume #2 covers studies undertaken by the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. The work published to date has been distributed to all governmental and non governmental groups concerned with aspects of urban research. Copies have also been sent to the main libraries, and there has been a sizable number of requests from outside the province.

The volume now in preparation covers studies and research by private consulting firms. Most of this material has now been collected and is being prepared for publication. It is expected to be available in a months time. The research officer for the project is Linda DeGrandis.

Co-ordination of Information Systems and Data Banks in Alberta

The request for this project has come from municipalities, regional commissions, and provincial government departments and agencies. It is under the joint supervision of the Task Force and the Provincial Co-ordinating

Committee of Statistics and Research.

The study involves identifying the agencies which have land related information, the type of information they have, what location identifiers and what land use classification systems they use. The purpose of the survey is to determine how these systems can utilize and relate to one another, in what areas there is a need for greater co-ordination, and the methods by which this might be accomplished. To understand the value of the project requires some understanding of the sizable investment being made in data banks, and their limited value for research and policy formulation unless they can be related to one another.

To date, questionnaires to obtain the necessary information have been sent out to some seventy (70) agencies (see Appendix I). Follow up interviews have been carried out for twenty (20) of them. It is expected that a preliminary report will be published in approximately two months, dealing with two of the key elements; location identifiers, and land use classification. The research officer for the project is Ernie Tessari.

Social and Economic Statistics for Municipalities

The purpose of the project is to provide for each municipality and service areas statistical material under some fifteen headings, including; population, education, vital statistics, housing and construction, income, wholesale, retail and service industries, hospitalization and health, government employment, motor vehicle registration etc. From three to twenty factors will be included under each heading. The information will be in a time series 1951-1973 wherever feasible. This information is not now available from a single source, nor under comparable time series or headings. The information should prove of value for any studies and research at the municipal, regional

or provincial level.

To date, all major sources of information have been contacted and the data is being compiled. The information will be published for each municipality, with the first of these being available within a months time. The research officer is Benjamin Fanta.

RESEARCH GRANTS PROVIDED BY TASK FORCE TO ASSIST URBAN ORIENTED RESEARCH

Regional Resources Project #1 (Drumheller Area)

This project has been in operation since September 1972. The objective was community and economic development, and involved the provision of information and technical assistance to the eleven municipalities involved.[1] The project is administered by the Municipalities and the technical advisor is Hugh Bodmer, with offices in Carbon.

At the end of one year of operation, an independant review and assessment of the project was prepared by Robert C. Scace and Associates. The conclusions of the report were that the project was very largely achieving its original objectives; that the newly formed Local Development Co-operatives showed considerable potential for community development; that the project had strong local support and had favorable reports from provincial agencies. It was recommended that the project be given support and assistance to enable it to continue for another year, and also that some of the methods used might usefully be applied in other areas of the province. The recommendation to continue the project has been approved by the Provincial Government, and funds provided to the Task Force to provide a grant for this purpose.

1 The Villages of Standard, Acme, Carbon, Rockyford, and Hussar; the Towns of Trochu and Bassano; the Municipal District of Starland and Kneehill, and Improvement District No. 7 which includes the Hamlets of Wyane, East Coulee, Rosedale and Nacmine.

The project is at present engaged in a number of studies and development activities. Related to the Local Development Co-operatives: eight houses are under construction or loans approved; in Trochu the co-operative has purchased a mobile home to provide a necessary office, on lease to the new doctor; in Standard negotiations are now underway to continue in operation two general stores whose owners are on the point of retirement; in Hussar the project co-ordinator is assisting the local farmers to establish a seed cleaning plant under a Provincial Department of Agriculture Program, where the Province, the Municipality and local farmers each contribute a third of the cost. The organizational work has been completed and work is continuing on the share selling campaign.

In terms of studies or promotional activities, on request, the Department of the Environment is carrying out water supply studies for the project communities. This study will be completed in approximately four months. Together with the Department of Industry and Commerce, the communities are examining the types of development which might feasibly be promoted in each and this would be the basis for any promotional material prepared. The communities are also reviewing and making suggestions concerning all federal and provincial programs for small towns. The results will be discussed with Mr. Ken Broadfoot, Director of Regional Services (Department of Industry and Commerce), at a meeting in the near future. In terms of any decline experienced by these communities, to date, relatively small scale development would achieve a measure of stability.

The National Film Board (Challenge For Change series) has documented this project since its beginning as a Task Committee some two and a half years ago. They have recently released the film under the title "Promises, Promises." It is a very effective summary in human terms of the viewpoints and problems

of the smaller communities and some of the measures used in this area to come to terms with these realities. It has already had fairly wide distribution in Western Canada.

Research Design for the Mill Woods Impact Study

This study was sponsored by the Alberta Housing Corporation, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Task Force on Urbanization. The consultants preparing the report were Stuart McFadyen and Christian Janssen. In addition to representatives from the sponsoring agencies, the advisory committee included representatives from: the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission; the City of Edmonton Planning Research Section; and the Mill Woods Project.

The final report has now been reviewed by the agencies involved, and a first meeting has been held to discuss what priorities should be attached to each of the research projects recommended, and what agencies would assume responsibility for them. (See Appendix II for the eight areas of research discussed in detail in the report.)

Although not all agencies have completed their review, there was general agreement on the approach suggested by the Alberta Housing Corporation. The Housing Model presently being developed by the Corporation could include, within its purview, Projects 1, 2, 3 and 8. It would provide information on housing supply and demand for each housing market area; indicate trends in residential lot prices, and the components of increase in costs such as services, higher standards etc. It would also be of assistance in assessing the impact of the Mill Woods Project. The information and resources of all the agencies represented on the study would be used in developing the model.

Projects 4, 5, 6 and 7 will be discussed at a further meeting but there was some indication that private consultants or the universities might more appropriately carry out some of these studies.

It was also recommended that the committee, for the time being, continue to meet regularly as it was felt this would be of value for the co-ordination of information and research on land and housing.

A number of agencies, both within and outside Alberta, have requested and received copies of the final report. The Urban Development Institute in Alberta has indicated its support for these studies, particularly Projects 1 to 4.

Because of the range of policy decisions on housing now being considered by all levels of government, it is hoped that the projects being discussed by the Committee will be given support and high priority.

NEW PROJECTS

Inter Municipal Services Study - City of Lethbridge, County of Lethbridge - Oldman River Regional Planning Commission

On the basis of an enquiry from the Commission and municipalities in this area, the Task Force indicated it would be willing to support and assist in a study of municipal services. The services identified for the study included: ambulance service, fire protection, solid waste disposal, and libraries. The study would examine level of service, costs and administrative arrangements. Insofar as present arrangements were unsatisfactory, a wide range of alternate methods of providing the service would be examined and evaluated.

Subsequent to these preliminary discussions the Commission and the Councils of the Municipalities have been discussing the area, the scope

and the details of the study. A decision has now been reached by the Councils of the regional municipalities on these matters. The study will be considered within the regional context. The initial study will basically involve the City of Lethbridge, the County of Lethbridge, the Town of Coaldale, the Town of Picture Butte, and the Village of Nobleford.

The study will be directed by a research officer employed for this purpose and located in the offices of the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission. Special consultants will be used for select areas of the Study. The Task Force will provide a grant covering sixty percent of the cost of the study, and also provide some research assistance.

Summary of the Preliminary Regional Plan - Peace River Regional Planning Commission

In preparing the preliminary regional plan, the planning commission has endeavoured to obtain a large measure of public involvement. One of its initial studies, The People of the Peace - Their Goals and Objectives, was an attempt through interviews and questionnaires to obtain from the residents of the area, an indication of their main concerns in regional development, and those matters which should be given high priority. The Commission has also used the various news media, at various stages of the study, to provide information to the people in the area.

This present publication is a summary of preliminary regional plan proposals. It is being published in newspaper tabloid form and being distributed to all residents in the region. At the request of the region, the Task Force has provided a grant to cover part of the costs of the publication. It may be one of a number of measures which might be used to achieve the objective that the regional plan reflects, or at least is aware of the values of the regional inhabitants.

Seminar on Regional and Provincial Economic Studies

The staff of the Task Force have had discussions with a number of agencies on the matter of a Seminar on Regional Economic Studies. Under consideration would be reports on economic studies recently completed or underway in Alberta, as well as any significant studies in other parts of Canada. Also included would be a discussion on any perceived needs for added study or research. The different levels of government and universities would be represented. It is hoped the seminar can be arranged for early in 1974.

Task Force on Urbanization and the Future

BOARD MEMBERS

The Honourable D.J. Russell, Minister of Municipal Affairs (Chairman)

The Honourable D. Getty, Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs

His Worship I.G. Dent, Mayor of the City of Edmonton

His Worship J.R.W. Sykes, Mayor of the City of Calgary

His Worship R.P. Swanson, Mayor of the City of Camrose

His Worship R.E. Barrett, Mayor of the City of Red Deer

STAFF

Frank Marlyn, Director

Michael K. Rumball, Research Officer

Valerie E. Edwards, Secretary

APPENDIX I

Co-ordination of Information Systems in Alberta

Questionnaire Circulation to Date

PILOT CIRCULATION:

1. Chief Provincial Assessor
2. Director of Surveys, Alberta
3. Research Director - Alberta Housing Corporation
4. City of Calgary - Urban Information and Operations Research
5. Provincial Planning Branch
6. Calgary Regional Planning Commission

MAIN CIRCULATION:

Cities:

CALGARY

- Management and Systems Development*
- Planning*
- Long Range Planning
- Engineering
- Industrial Development
- Land
- Assessment
- Parks and Recreation
- Urban Information and Operations Research

EDMONTON

- Assessment
- Business Development
- Mill Woods Project
- City Planning*
- Realty Development*
- Property & Building Management*
- Research & Long Range Planning

RED DEER

- Economic Development
- Land and Tax
- City Commissioner*
- Engineering Department

GRANDE PRAIRIE

- City Assessor
- Development Officer

CAMROSE

- City Clerk

WETASKIWIN

- City Manager

LLOYDMINSTER

- City Commissioner
- City Clerk
- City Engineer

LETHBRIDGE

- City Manager

Provincial Government Agencies:

- Workmen's Compensation Board*
- Edmonton Land Titles
- Calgary Land Titles
- Treasury - Taxation*
- Treasury - Purchasing Agency*
- Lands and Forests - Registration*
- Lands and Forests - Alberta Forest Service
- Lands and Forests - Fish and Wildlife
- Lands and Forests - Lands
- Lands and Forests - Provincial Parks
- Lands and Forests - Technical Division
- Public Works - Chief Structural Engineer
- Public Works - Project Engineer*
- Health and Social Development - Senior Research Officer
- Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission
- Energy Resources Conservation Board
- Mines and Minerals - Statistician
- Manpower and Labor - Planning Secretariat
- Culture, Youth and Recreation - Planning and Development
- Culture, Youth and Recreation - Recreation Development
- Education - Finance, Statistics and Legislation
- Education - Central Files
- Education - Operational Research
- Agriculture - Statistics
- Agriculture - Resource Economics
- Agriculture - Regulatory Services
- Agriculture - Market Intelligence
- Agriculture - Veterinary Services
- Agriculture - Soil and Feed Testing Laboratory

Crown Corporations:

- Alberta Housing Corporation - Research and Development*
- Alberta Housing Corporation - Land Assembly

Regional Planning Commissions:

- Battle River
- Calgary
- Edmonton
- Medicine Hat
- Oldman River
- Peace River
- Red Deer

Private Companies:

- Calgary Power - Technical Services
- Calgary Power - System Planning

* Indicates no response expected due to;

1. Questionnaire supplied for information of recipient only, or
2. Deemed non-relevant to agency operation, by the recipient, or
3. Response combined with another department at request of recipient.

APPENDIX II

Research Design for the Mill Woods Impact Study

Recommended Areas of Research

Project 1

Examination of the trend in residential lot prices in the Edmonton sub-region

Project 2

Identification of the components of the increase in land costs

Project 3

Measurement of the influence of the level of improvement costs on residential land costs

Project 4

Measurement of the influence of public sector supply restrictions (zoning, subdivision regulation, development agreements etc.)

Project 5

Study of the industrial organization of the private sector land market and identification of the nature of private sector restrictions on land supply

Project 6

Measurement of the value of various elements of natural scarcity of urban land (distance from city centre, access, adjoining uses etc.)

Project 7

Identification of those groups whose incomes are increased or decreased by land bank operations and measurement of the extent of income redistribution involved

Project 8

Collection and analysis of data necessary to provide a continuing monitoring of the Edmonton land market and the impact of the Mill Woods land bank thereon.

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